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ABSTRACT

Two speeches from the 1970 Wisconsin Elementary Language Arts Conference are included in this document. In "The Changing World of Language Arts," William Jenkins characterizes language as man's most important possession, and the study of it as possibly the student's most crucial undertaking. He also suggests that the modern language arts program should include a new sense of the relation between student and teacher, should develop the individual child's expressive and imaginative capabilities as well as his intellectual faculties, and should encourage children to learn cooperatively rather than competitively. In "The Creative Teacher in the Elementary Schools," Eldonna Evertts describes the creative teacher as one who fosters the self discovery and growth of the individual while focusing on both the content and skills of English; and one who leads children to initiate their own ideas and activities in the study of literature, dramatics, composition, spelling, and handwriting, as well as in the use of a variety of instructional aids. (JB)

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WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

PROCEEDINGS: WISCONSIN ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS CONFERENCE

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Wisconsin State University
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
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PREFACE

In a day of rapid change and constant frustrations, it appears particularly fitting for a group of elementary language arts teachers to reexamine both the nature of the English language arts and its function in the schools, for it is the language arts teacher who offers the touchstone of humanity through the language and literature of man. In a very real sense, to explore our language experiences is to explore our own being, and in no other way can we ever learn to function with perspective or to achieve the personal sensitivity which is a prerequisite for human survival. Nothing less than the hope of the future is at stake!

It was in this spirit that the Elementary Language Arts Conference was conceived, and it was in this same spirit that so many participated. The following is but small tribute to their professional interest and human concern.

Jack Kean
Marvin Klein
Jane Reed

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I

THE CHANGING WORLD OF LANGUAGE ARTS

By

William A. Jenkins

The language arts are concerned with a wide assortment of things having to do with language development, use, and transmission. The concerns range from the tom-toms of men of long ago to the very sophisticated Telstar satellite which now circles the earth. As a school subject language arts is concerned primarily with the study of using verbal language to communicate: the effective, precise, efficient, artistic, and economic receiving and expressing of ideas for a variety of purposes; and the skills of transmission.

In a very real sense language arts represents a series of paradoxes. While it is concerned with the content or the ideas themselves. While it is concerned with the development of skills on the one hand, and the learning processes involved in acquiring these skills on the other hand, the two concerns complement each other. The language arts are concerned with how an individual uses language and the social effects of this language as it elicits statements or behavior from others. The language arts have utilitarian concerns: how best and simplest to express an idea, a goal which may be contrasted with the relatively unrestricted creative aspects of language when used artistically and aesthetically.

Since there are paradoxes surrounding the language arts, there is incomplete agreement on what should be taught in our schools, how it should be taught, the order in which it should be taught, and the media for teaching. These paradoxes present uncertainties which in my view represent both strengths and weaknesses in teaching the language arts. They create feelings

of great insecurity in teachers on the one hand, and they provide a wide open subject for investigation and study by scholars of the subject on the other. The uncertainties, I think, lead us directly to continual study, questioning, and revision. The child in the elementary school, who in the last analysis is our consumer, at times may be puzzled by the absence of consensus, but somehow he does manage to pick his way through the maze and continues to use the language -- just as he did before he even entered the schoolroom -- to make his wishes known, to influence other people, and to receive ideas from them.

We all know that language is a convention and because it is this those who are to become skilled and facile in its use are forced to bow to custom. Those who have mastered the conventions of language best, theoretically at least, speak most fluently and command the greatest amount of attention. But we must remember that language is also a very individualistic mode of expression and at times it does violence to the conventions which give it its structure. Because of the individualistic characteristics of language it is constantly in a state of flux and growth. As individualistic expressions are adopted by more and more people the language, and specific ingredients in it, undergoes peaks of acceptability and rejections. Learning a language thereby is made all the more difficult, but at the same time teaching language in the eyes of many teachers is made more challenging and interesting.

We teachers of the English language arts have long been concerned with the matter of standards and a great many of us have directed much of our effort to bringing individual pupils up to an imaginary desired level of proficiency, both in skill and in attitude. In the past, much of our work has been devoted to the improving of literary taste. Both of these objectives

are valid today, but our approach to language is becoming more functional, liberal, and informal.

We teachers have long questioned whether to use old and tested materials rather than the new and untried. In our attempts to relate language study to everyday life we have devoted much of our efforts to incorporating the materials and issues of everyday life in our English language arts classrooms. Newspapers, magazines, motion pictures, television, and other less esoteric language media materials currently are being used to good effect. The problem of how to maintain, emphasize, foster, and capitalize on the interrelationships of the language arts is a topic of very great concern to us.

Many of us have accepted the idea that language development is a passkey to personality development. Because this is so we are concerned with how to foster imagination and creativity in all activities in classrooms. We know that a great many efforts of curriculum innovators and creators have been directed to freeing the teacher from the textbook. It is their feeling that textbooks have a very vital role to play in the language arts curriculum, but they feel that its best use would be as a teaching resource rather than as the main, sole, indispensable teaching aid.

New studies in the language arts evolve as studies in the science of language proceed. Teachers translate them, but slowly, into viable teaching strategies. A case in point is the work done in linguistics in the last few years. The evolution of strategies is exemplified by the fact that even though linguistics has been highlighted for several years now, approaches for teaching it are not yet completely viable and many teachers must still gain the requisite skill, understanding, and teaching techniques to capitalize on the new emphasis. Linguistic approaches may in the future -- but they have not as yet done so -- revolutionize the teaching of a large segment of the language arts.

So far the science of linguistics has presented for teachers a theory for language analysis and certain discrete ways for evaluating our language. However, teaching materials available today are experimental and somewhat disjointed in character, if not in intent, or else they are non-existent. I think it is safe to conclude that while many teachers do concede that they have not yet mastered linguistic analysis, they feel that the system is a much more complete and valid representation of how language works than is the traditional grammatical analysis.

As a profession we are becoming more and more aware of the fact that we live in a verbal world, a world in which perhaps fifty percent of our activities are linguistically based and oriented. This point might be substantiated by the fact that perhaps half of the cost of a new automobile stems from the verbalizations surrounding its design, manufacture, and marketing. A further example is presented by those who say that half of this country's astronomical defense budget is spent, not on the implements of war, but on the words necessary to run the machinery to fight the war. We do agree, however, that man has just two ways of settling his differences, whether the differences exist between individuals or nations: through using words or using weapons. Because the choice between the two is obvious, it lends further credence to a widely accepted view that language is man's most important possession and language study in the schools is probably the student's most critical undertaking.

Extending this idea further, we underscore the fact that the language arts, as well as language, are basically social in character. It is they that reveal how men think, behave, affect each other, and record all of these occurrences.

Just a few years ago it was hoped that through the work of men such as Jerome Bruner the structure of many school subjects, including the language arts, could

be devined and the critically important aspects of language arts study pulled out for emphasis in the curriculum. Unfortunately this designation of the critical aspects of the curriculum has not been accomplished and so there is still little agreement existing about what to teach in the language arts. The result is that we do not have a common set of objectives. Most teachers are committed to the notion, however, that language is vital, that language determines one's development as an individual human being, as a member of a group, and as an active citizen. Through our focus on early education programs and on the need for improving the curriculum in urban (central city) schools, we are just coming to recognize that of all of the subjects in the elementary school curriculum perhaps the mastery of that which is taught in the language arts is the most critical.

A few years ago it was fashionable to say that every teacher is a teacher of English or of the language arts. The boundaries of English were as wide as of the boundaries of love, and some teachers took the view that teaching English is teaching love. Such a view is rarely advanced today, for it is recognized that while the language arts are an all-school study because of their breadth, there really are discrete boundaries and provinces.

A number of philosophers have defined language as an art handed down from generation to generation. Philosophers and psychologists agree that language is best learned at an optimum time, but neither they nor educators can agree just what this optimum time should be. The art of language arts, therefore, stems from a mixture of custom, habit, and exigency. Many teachers use books as the only medium of teaching language and the language arts. Pejoratively speaking, they truly are artists.

Scientific investigations into the art of teaching do not reveal how to convince teachers to use a variety of materials and teaching aids, and not to rely solely on books. Studies have not shown, either, how to evaluate learning materials, including textbooks, in a precise and effective manner.

Just as the art of teaching language and the language arts has not developed, the science of language arts has not developed either. We have little scientific knowledge about how to remove errors from children's writing and speech, to cite one example. Inaccuracies, incongruencies, and unconventional speech persist in the language of children in spite of all efforts to remove them. Research efforts have not led to foolproof ways in which to motivate children to write or how to grade their writing once it has been submitted. Teachers still depend on the art, the logic, or the custom of teaching to tell them how much writing should be elicited from children. Scientific investigations and carefully developed logical positions have corrected the continuing neglect of speaking and listening activities in the elementary school, but the change so far has been insufficient to make a measurable difference.

The current focus on disadvantaged children -- sometimes called educationally mismanaged children -- has not revealed how meaningful programs can be differentiated in a significant way for these unfortunates in our society. Teachers exercise their art to give these children more particular subjects and they attempt to do a better job of teaching, but discretely different programs for them have seldom been developed.

The art of teaching, not the science, provides the answer to the question of how much oral language versus how much silent reading should be provided in the elementary classroom. The science of education is unable to show few cause

and effect relationships between any of the distinct language arts and various environmental factors. The effect of a child's physical makeup, for example, on his language ability is known only in a general way. The extent to which environmental deprivation, which in turn affects social and emotional development, which in turn affects the language arts development, again is known only in a general fashion. I think it can be safely concluded that the "art" of language arts currently eclipses the science. Valid research finding of what, when, where, who, why, and how of the language arts are rare and frequently suspect. Much, much more research and experimentation by educators, especially those who are teaching children, is called for. Apparently some is forthcoming, but there is continuing, critical need for focus on the language arts individually and collectively in order that the breadth of knowledge can be expanded, at least to the point where the science is equal to the art.

If one accepts the idea, advanced in many quarters, that no one person can teach another but rather can only provide the environment and the conditions for learning, then it has to follow that many of the approaches to language arts teaching today are in need of improvement. The greatest need may be to shift from a "telling approach" in the language arts, to the "discovery approach" which has been adopted by many science and mathematics teachers. The science teacher uses the method of discovery. The good English arts teacher can do this also.

While they were preparing new curriculum materials in mathematics, the School Mathematics Study group decided that even junior high school students could formulate mathematics questions and objectives which they could test and perhaps settle. G. Robert Carlsen at the University of Iowa has expressed this hope regarding the English language arts curriculum: "English is fascinating because of its opportunities for creation and discovery. Even students may

formulate linguistic, literary, and composing questions and conjectures which they can test...perhaps settle?"

Kahlil Gibran wrote that no man can give another of his understanding. Yet, teachers can give students their attitudes and can facilitate the learning which will take place. This is the spirit of Professor Carlsen's position and a good language arts program today. Similarly, Plato called the teacher the intellectual midwife. Many farseeing educators today view the teacher primarily as a catalyst who brings about a reaction between pupils and learning materials and situations.

A very common feeling today is that the efficiency of man's thinking structures is dependent upon their use. This being so, the modern language arts program today provides opportunity for children to make mistakes, to make false starts, to test assumptions, and to learn from all of these trials and errors. In enriched programs in the language arts today there are more and varied opportunities for such experimentation. As I see it, the possibilities for the use, the enrichment, and the experimentation are unlimited.

For a number of years most serious discussions of the English language arts as a school subject, whether of the ways of teaching and learning which are appropriate, or of the reform of the curriculum, or of the training or retraining of English language arts teachers, has been carried on within a set of assumptions held and conclusions advanced by members of the Basic Issues Conference which was held in 1958. But in recent years the prevaling view of the subject has been seriously challenged. A new view has been demanded and fortunately I can suggest that a new view has been slowly emerging.

At the time of the Basic Issues Conference it seemed most important to the participants to clarify the real nature of the English language arts, to rescue teachers from the confusion of materials and ends within which they were

forced to operate, to re-establish it as a discipline fully as intellectual and systematic, say, as algebra or biology. The English language arts were then language, literature, and composition, a tripod of sorts.

This content curriculum, with its three part division, its residual but continuing concern for developing the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening; and its focus upon the academically able students provided the impetus to curriculum development in the 1960's. There are those who would now challenge this view as being wholly inadequate and considerably inappropriate for our times. It has been challenged by the social revolution in American education during the latter half of the 1960's. It has been challenged by the Dartmouth seminar in 1966.

What appears to be needed now and what appears to be emerging is a new curriculum, a new sense of the relation of student and teacher. In the emerging view the first concern is with the child's ability to use language comfortably and freely. His language is less a subject for study than it is an activity, or a set of activities, more or less directed, more or less purposeful. It includes activities that allow children to explore, to try out, their various uses of language, from the everyday to the artistic, and to grow in and through such exploring, such tryings. The emerging view shows a child reading, writing, talking, responding, expressing, explaining, sorting out; communicating, discovering, thinking. The emerging curriculum is responsive to children as children and not as incomplete adults. It is directed to the imagination as well as the intellect. It provides occasion for free use of the child's own language as the medium of learning and treats literary works not only as a source of pleasure but also as occasions for the exploration of human thought and experience. The emerging view presents a teacher aware of the social implications of English as a national language which is made up of many dialects.

The English language arts in this new view is work organized for truly humanitarian ends, humanely presented. First it focuses on achieving the fullest possible growth of the individual child's expressive and imaginative as well as his intellectual faculties. Second, it develops in children the ability and willingness to organize themselves in order to work together, in order to carry on learning cooperatively rather than competitively.

There are important implications in this view for all who work in the English language arts. There is an immediate and urgent relevance to those planning school programs and to those preparing English language arts teachers. This view demands a sophisticated and careful response to the dilemma of the school and whole school systems. Such a view demands a fairly conscious awareness of the social implications of our subject. Perhaps the profoundest of these implications stems from our age of social change and conflict.

II

THE CREATIVE TEACHER IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by
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The teaching of the language arts would be deadly without creativity although creativity is not confined only to the English classroom. Creativity has existed in the educational and psychological literature for some time but a new point of view is emerging, influenced to a great extent by the ideas expressed at the Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching of English held at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1966.

In the past, emphasis has been given too heavily to intellectual pursuits. Many teachers have never explored improvised drama, engaged in imaginative writing, or utilized talk for learning. Having never taught in a creative environment, they lack an understanding of how to make their teaching creative. John Dixon when writing on "Teacher Education" in his publication, Growth through English indicates the priority in the preparation of creative teachers.

> Our first concern therefore is that teachers of English at all levels should have more opportunity to enjoy and refresh themselves in their subject, using language in operation for all its central purposes--in imaginative drama, writing and speech, as well as response to literature. Teachers without this experience --who would never think of writing a poem, flinch at the idea of "acting", and rarely enter into discussion of the profounder human issues in everyday experience--are themselves deprived and are likely in turn to limit the experience of their pupils.[1]

Creativity can take many forms. It is apparent in dance, art, drama, literature. It can be a process for gaining new insights or for ordering one's world. But it cannot be outlined, formulated, or explicitly stated aforetime within a printed curriculum. I am not as much interested in any suggestions that have been incorporated into the curriculum guide as I am in

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[1]Dixon, John, Growth through English. Reading: National Association for the Teaching of English, 1967. p. 107.

what the individual teacher is doing in the classroom. It is here that real education takes place. Nevertheless, there are some generally accepted and rational teaching practices and attitudes that promote creativity. These I would like to explore with you.

Creativity is an attitude of expectation with which the teacher regards himself and his pupils. He expects to find new ways of thinking about the commonplace, of solving the problems arising during a classroom disucssion, or of resolving personality or interest conflicts. This kind of creativity evolves not through telling the pupils what needs to be done or how to do it, but rather, by the questions generated by pupils as they seek answers. A solution may have been original for the group of individuals involved, but it need not have been the first time such a solution was discovered. Yet it is in allowing the pupil to search, to seek the missing element, or to rearrange the known that the sensitivity and humaneness of the teacher becomes apparent.

A creative teacher is not threatened with such an informal discussion but listens to the ideas which the pupils have to say. Usually he has a pretty good idea of how an issue might be resolved. Yet, he allows his pupils to explore, to succeed or at times to fail. He accepts what is offered. He gives time for each one who wishes to orally explain a solution. He can do this because he knows that during this vocalization much learning is taking place. At times, thinking aloud becomes a creative element in itself and indeed it is all too often a new experience for the pupil. Sometimes creativity means the opportunity of thinking and talking without interference by another pupil or adult.

I recall not too long ago watching a young mother playing with her daughter of twenty months. The child was investigating a new toy--one that was both sturdy and simple to operate but composed of several independent movable parts. The child, deeply absorbed for a considerable length of time in her investigation, was finally shown by her mother how each of the parts operated. The mystery, now solved, no longer offered any challenge so the toy was cast aside. But let us rather, give a pupil an opportunity to learn as much as he can from his environment and the activities of the classroom--and not deny him the privilege of self-discovery.

Some believe colleges of education or school systems are doing all they can to help teachers be creative but in many instances this thinking is fallacious. When the teacher walks into the classroom, we expect him to know intuitively how to meet the needs of all kinds of pupils--the migrant, the disadvantaged, the slow, the average. During the pre-service years and later during in-service, programs should be designed to help teachers become more sensitive to children and the ways learning can occur most readily.

A consensus held by scholars of English and specialists in education from Great Britain and the United States following the Dartmouth Seminar was that English instruction needs improvement and such improvement is dependent upon better teacher preparation and in-service programs.

> Together with the primary ability to read, write, speak, and listen well, they urged in general the need of making English a more liberal, humane study,...the recommendations of the seminar call for drastic changes in the ways English is taught in both countries. This would require the reeducation of most teachers, principals, superintendents, school boards--and parents.[1]

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[1] Muller, Herbert J., The Uses of English. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967. p.14.

For too long, we have considered the end result and not what children were learning, feeling, and thinking during periods of individual development. It is not what we tried to teach or what facts the pupils remembered but rather what the pupil thought and experienced during that process. At a recent institute in Lansing several Mexican-Americans, reflecting on their own education, stressed not the facts they had learned but the feelings and emotions they experienced as they assimilated this information. The acceptance of their culture and language by those representing education, the attitude of the teachers toward them, and casual remarks by teachers are what they recall today. Of course, those knowledgeable in child growth and development have been telling us this all along, but we did not listen. We forgot to look at the child and what was happening to him. We placed our faith on the content, the discipline, scholarly research, the accumulation of knowledge. Many of our testing programs are memorials to these follies.

Alfred Grommon, during the year he was president of NCTE, made a detailed study of the materials produced in the Project English Centers. Reporting at the first of the NCTE/NDEA Institutes for State Supervisors of English and Reading held on the University of Illinois campus in the fall of 1968, he stated that the process used in the production of materials developed in Wisconsin paralleled more closely the conclusions expressed at Dartmouth than did those of other centers. These materials, developed before the influence of Dartmouth, are nevertheless in harmony with it. It is a program characterized by teacher participation, pupil involvement, and experimentation. In programs such as these the teacher can be creative--develop and adjust activities for his class that permit cooperative planning, purposeful discussion, and individual growth.

Today my plea is for creative teachers who will respect the experiences

of his pupils and will lead them into realms of investigation without concern for the usual, traditional pattern of learning. While serving as a consultant at the Dartmouth Seminar, I heard a story about a little girl who was deeply moved when she saw a kitten squashed by a motor lorry on her way to school. John Dixon chose to include this incident in his book and I wish to retell it here because it illustrates a new dimension of creativity.

After witnessing the accident, the girl did not enter in the planned activities of the day but went directly to the drawing board and made picture after picture. After expressing her feelings in this medium, she wrote, with help from her teacher, captions under each one. Writing these became another way to express what she had experienced. Incidently, when the captions are read, they present a coherent and organized story. But most important, she came to grip with life and death and the realization that life continues. She entered into the role of the kitten and then was able to assume the role of a by-stander. In this case drawing and writing helped her to move from the position of participant to that of spectator. She gained control over a personal, emotional need through self-expression in art and in language. Let me read to you the sentences appearing under each picture.

The sun is waving goodbye to you all.

The Moon is coming out said the kitten
to himself.

Today I hear the thrushes sing on my lawn
said the kitten to himself.

The thrushes are in the garden and the
kitten is in the garden.

The kitten is coming to church said
the children.

The kitten is coming home said the children.

Goodbye said the children.

The kitten is coming to bed said the mice.

> The kitten is coming to town said all
> the kittens.
>
> The lorry is coming to squash the kitten
> said the mice.
>
> The lorry is coming to squash the kitten
> said the children.
>
> The kitten is squashed.
>
> And that is the end of my story about the
> kitten.[1]

What is important here is not that she had command of language art skills but that painting and writing provided the avenue for a new experience which in turn developed a measure of control over a previous experience. Her work for this day was an experience in itself--an experience more effective than any a teacher could have contrived. In this classroom situation, I see the teacher as being creative. She was willing to set aside her planned program for pupil initiated activity. Sometimes the most effective way to be creative is to be receptive to what is happening and at the appropriate mement gently guide activity into productive channels.

Yes, teaching is an art, but an art which can be cultivated.

Creativity can be an active process expressed in painting, writing, or oral interpretation; it can be a passive or mental activity as when reading or responding thoughtfully to the creative efforts of others. When studying a literary selection, for example, a person can become aware of ideas and concepts not previously recognized. He can respond creatively within the inner resources of his mind and have an experience based upon the creative effort of others. How important, then, to allow time in the classroom schedule for reading children's literature and engaging in this type of creativity. Since Charlotte Huck has talked extensively on children's literature, I will not need to dwell long on this topic. Suffice it to say, teachers find that

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[1]Dixon, John, Growth through English. Reading: National Association for the Teaching of English, 1967. pp. 26-27.

children love literature. It opens many avenues for individual investigation, enjoyment and appreciation.

Nonetheless, I must not skip too lightly over literature in the elementary school, since it is not usually regarded as one of the language arts. If elementary teachers think only in terms of the language arts, children's literature could be overlooked. Many who do use the term, language arts, find it to be very limiting since it refers only to the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is cold, abstract and impersonal. Whereas warmth, understanding, feelings, or attitudes are involved whenever language appears. So the arts of language should be expanded to include more than skills. It should encompass literature and the other uses of language.

The study of language becomes important because it is so close to the individual and his way of looking at the outside world. Likewise, composition is important because it permits the individual another kind of response to his personal world by drawing upon rhetorical principles. Sometimes the use of the word 'English' helps us to gain this larger sense because it generally means, literature, language, composition plus the skills. It seems to me, when we consider the elementary school pupil, that we must accept the multiplicity and complexity of English--its content and its skills. Both of these contribute to the unfoldment of the child's personality as an individual, humane and literate.

I am further aware that classroom programs which become overlyconcerned with either content or with skill while ignoring the growth of the individual are neither creative nor productive. The mundane events of the day or the exciting moments of one's life are of far greater meaning and impact to the individual than are skills of talking and writing taken in isolation. Notwithstanding, the possession of the language arts skills helps the child to

explore, to communicate, to find expression. Consequently in the elementary school we can not ignore building these skills. Classroom projects and activities are drastically affected by the level of maturity of pupils as indicated by their command of the language arts skills. To function well in school, pupils must know how to write and spell.

Handwriting represents a mechanical skill, dependent upon physical dexterity. Spelling represents the ability to note and recall the form of words, an awareness of the morphological changes which can be made with these words, and includes an understanding of historical changes in words and the existence of spelling patterns. However, for beginning instruction in the primary grades, spelling and handwriting have much in common. The pupil approaches both of these with little background. Each comprises sub-skills which must be developed.

But I would like the creative teacher not to teach these skills mechanically but to have many individual and class activities which require the use of them. Knowing how to perform these in isolation is not as valuable as knowing how to write or spell when one needs to.

The curriculum for a specific classroom can be so structured by the teacher that a real need develops for the use of these skills. Pupils can then understand the reason for short drills or exercises. They can learn how to acquire these skills most efficiently. It is at this point of instruction that the teacher becomes extremely important. Here he brings to bear all his knowledge of the content area, his knowledge of sequencing and organization, his knowledge of teaching techniques, his knowledge of educational psychology.

It is possible to blend the teaching of skills and content and to provide a classroom atmosphere which allows experimentation and builds on pupil interest. This past summer a young teacher taught an elementary class at the University of Illinois. Her teaching exemplified some of the ideas I have been talking about and I am sure any creative teacher could incorporate some of her techniques

into any existing curriculum. Instead of introducing a new lesson isolated from all the other class activities as we so often tend to do, she let her pupils discover all they could about the task before even beginning the class. After she asked a few questions, they planned what to do next. The result was a working laboratory, albeit a noisy one.

The class was informal and free and yet it was structured. The teacher was guiding but not always talking or giving assignments. When the pupils came into the classroom in the morning, they selected an interest area where they worked for some time. These work areas were usually tables located in different corners or spaces in an average sized room. Before the opening of school the teacher had placed on these tables selected books from children's literature; manipulation mathematics objects; objects for feeling and handling; pen, pencil and paper; art supplies; and other exploratory or instructional materials. Readily accessible to the pupils were a cluster of shelves containing mimeographed maps, study sheets, notebooks, and other materials. At times much of the work of the pupils was based upon the activities of the previous day; sometimes the materials led to new projects. As pupils were ready to share with others or wanted to talk about the problems they encountered, the group moved into classroom activity centered around discussion learning or situation planning periods. These could be related to reading instruction, social studies, or other subjects.

Creative dramatics is another instructional activity that is gaining in importance in the elementary school. Even the junior and senior high schools are stressing it more. And at the college level the teachers of literature are becoming interested in this dramatic approach. But let us go back to creative dramatics for our particular people.

Drama can begin with movement in the early years. Singing games and other group games are a logical beginning. Individual acting and pantomime follow. These, of course, call for individual participation. Occasionally a sentence or two of free conversation can be added.

Most primary teachers know that children delight in role playing. Often it is followed by the acting out of stories read or told in class. The creative teacher encourages the child to become the character he portrays. Actually the child leaves himself behind, to become a lion, the troll, or Goldilocks. Moffett in his monograph Drama: What is Happening, published by NCTE, gives a basis for planning an entire curriculum using drama as the central mode of organization. If you are investigating new curricula patterns, Moffett's pamphlet can give you a basis for a creative design extending on with "the person as an inner person (soliloquy) to a speaker-about-things (essay)".[1]

Many teachers have found that all the activities I have mentioned contribute to reading. Reading is much more than instruction in skill development. It relates closely to growth and development of all the other language arts. John Carroll writes

> Only an individual who has a considerable mastery of the spoken language is able to infer how a written text might reasonably be spoken, from the limited cues supplied by the test and its punctuation.[2]

The creative teacher will provide many opportunities for his pupils to listen to stories read by himself and by other pupils, thus enabling the average child, as well as the bilingual or the bi-dialectual child to become familiar with the

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[1]Moffett, James, Drama: What is Happening, Champaign, Illinois, National Council of Teachers of English, 1967. p. V.

[2]Carroll, John B., Language and Thought. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964. p. 62.

syntax of the written page and its contrast with the spoken. In this way the creative teacher helps even the youngest to realize the pleasure to be gained from mastering the reading process.

Now, let's take a close look at the creative teacher. Probably no individual could exemplify in a single day all the characteristics that I am going to describe. Nevertheless, each day that one or more of these find expression, teaching has become an art.

The creative teacher in the elementary school is ever aware of curriculum changes in the field of the language arts. He is venturesome and dares to experiment without feeling handicapped by administrative protocol. For too long, teachers have felt they needed an expert to proclaim, "This is an excellent idea." The time has come, if he is truly creative, to say, "I believe it will work. I'm going to try it."

The creative teacher draws upon the entire environment of the child. He searches the backyards of the community in which each lives. The child then becomes a part of the life of his community and even of the larger world. He is not bound or tied to any curriculum or textbook to the extent that these become the sole focus, but rather he recognizes that classroom walls can never become the circumference for learning.

The creative teacher has rapport with his pupils. He has their confidence and they are willing to go ahead and do things with him. He can place himself in the background allowing the pupils to handle many situations. The teacher and pupils respect each other. The teacher is especially careful not to plant seeds producing drop-outs or "push-outs."

The creative teacher not only sees that drama becomes an important part of the classroom activities but he, too, enters the dramatic situation. He

can move from role to role helping the actors to live their own roles. He recognizes the values to be gained from such experiences as he uses them frequently.

The creative teacher lives literature and enjoys reading orally to his pupils. He reads effectively and meaningfully. He introduces his pupils to biography, folk tales, fiction, and poetry. He encourages his pupils to experiment with oral uses of language.

Finally, the creative teacher is a professional teacher. He belongs to his affiliate as you people do here in Wisconsin. He is a member of his national organization. He's willing to change; he's willing to grow. He pushes himself out of ruts. He doesn't alibi by saying, "I'm not in the rut, I'm in the groove." Grooves, too, can become ruts.

I hope you're not in either one.

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